

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today questioned General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, and Karl Eikenberry, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, at a House Armed Services Committee (HASC) hearing on the effectiveness of America's military strategy in Afghanistan. Rep. Sanchez was particularly interested in the potential impact of President Obama's recent troop surge, and whether the Armed Services would request additional troops in the future.

"Earlier this year, President Obama laid out an Afghanistan strategy that involved disrupting terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, developing self-reliant Afghan security forces, and encouraging President Karzai to create an effective, accountable government," said Rep. Sanchez. "At the time, the Administration requested 20,000 troops to help carry out these objectives. Now, eight months later, we're being presented the same objectives but being told we need to deploy an additional 30,000 troops. I want assurance that these troops are instrumental to achieving our security goals in Afghanistan."

Rep. Sanchez was also concerned about Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai's ability and willingness to eliminate corruption in his government. Following up on a line of questioning she pursued at last week's HASC hearing with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Rep. Sanchez asked Ambassador Eikenberry if he thought President Karzai would fulfill his promise to create a transparent, accountable government.

"We cannot win this war without the support of the Afghani people, and that support largely depends on President Karzai's willingness to clean house," said Rep. Sanchez. "In his Afghanistan assessment, General McChrystal stated that 'there is a crisis of confidence among Afghans' in their government that 'undermines our credibility.' What are we going to do to ensure the Karzai government lives up to its promises?"

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